

**Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks**

St. Andrews State Park

Proposed Unit Management Plan Amendment, May 2020

Background

St. Andrews State Park is located in Bay County at the pass between St. Andrews Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. The park is comprised of lands on both the mainland and Shell Island. Access to the park is from State Road 392. The Shell Island portion of the park is accessible only by boat. St. Andrews State Park was initially acquired on August 23, 1946. Currently, the park consists of 1,167 acres.

In October of 2018, the park was severely impacted by Hurricane Michael as was much of the region. The areas on the north side of the peninsula, where the group camp is located, saw the worst impacts. Hundreds of trees were lost along with many of the facilities needed to support numerous important and popular recreation opportunities at the park. The proposed amendment would restore much needed functions to the park's primitive group camp area. As much of the tree cover in the area was damaged and altogether downed by Hurricane Michael, a new multi-purpose pavilion is proposed to provide shelter for interpretive and educational sessions, cooking, dining, and various group activities. In addition, the current restroom facility is in poor condition and does not provide adequate service to the volume of guests using the area.

Visitation Demands

Classified as a recreation area, St. Andrews State Park was acquired to provide exceptional resource-based public outdoor recreation opportunities to Florida residents and visitors while ensuring the conservation and protection of valuable natural resources, including imperiled species and unique ecosystems, in a fast-growing region in the Florida panhandle.

St. Andrews State Park consistently ranks among the five most visited parks in the Florida State Park system and strives to offer remarkable resource-based public outdoor recreation opportunities unique to its location at the confluence of St. Andrews Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. During fiscal year 2018 – 2019, St. Andrews State Park served over 650 thousand visitors and had a direct economic impact of \$57 million to the local economy. This rate of activity continues to require maintaining a high level of service for safe and enjoyable public recreation.

The primitive group camp is open and available to all organized and chaperoned youth groups and secondarily to non-organizational or educational groups. Priority is given to youth groups for the use of these areas. The primitive group camp has served hundreds of organized youth groups through the years. Groups are both local and non-local and consist of both Boy and Girl Scouts, church functions, and school classes.

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Conceptual Land Use Plan

Proposed Pavilion and Primitive Group Camp Restroom Upgrade

In response to the loss of shade trees, a new 6-8 table standard pavilion is proposed for the primitive group camp area to provide shelter for visitors in this otherwise harsh coastal environment. Also, in order to provide better service to campers, it is proposed that the current restroom be replaced with a Standard Design 4 Fixture Restroom (see example design below).

Plan #12

General Use: Day use areas and trail side

122 SF Enclosed
169 SF Non-Enclosed
291 SF Total

4 FIXTURE RESTROOM

As-built example can be seen at Topsail Hill Preserve State Park

STONE WAINSCOT OPTION

BRICK VENEER EXTERIOR

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Potential Impacts to Natural and Cultural Resources

Natural resource impacts are not anticipated as the footprints of the proposed structures would occur entirely within the existing, vegetation-free group camp area. The facility improvements would therefore not result in the loss of any portion of existing natural communities or impact any native vegetation.

Cultural resource impacts are not expected due to the minimal footprint of the proposed structures and their location within an already altered use area. As with all construction or other ground-disturbing activities on state lands, however, review and recommendations by the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources (DHR) will be obtained before construction.

